



# Addressing Environmental Justice Issues Through *PACE EH*

*Protocol for Assessing Community  
Excellence in Environmental Health*

# Why Use *PACE EH*?

- *PACE EH* adheres to the principles of community collaboration, environmental justice, and cultural competency.
- The process helps build knowledge and skills in these areas. *PACE EH* requires mutual respect and inclusion of diverse community members to achieve successful results.

# Why Use *PACE EH*?

## Changing Demographics

- Reports from the Census Bureau indicate that the nation is more racially and ethnically diverse in the year 2000 than it was in 1990. And this trend is expected to continue.
- Further, research suggests changing demographics and environmental public health disparities require culturally competent interventions, and communication strategies in order to eliminate negative health outcomes related to environmental health.

# Why Use *PACE EH*?

## ■ Environmental Public Health Disparities

-disparities occur when overall susceptibility to disease is greater and illness rates are higher due to a broad range of environmental conditions.

# Why Use *PACE EH*?

- The *PACE EH* process can be used to address environmental justice issues given its ability to guide communities through a culturally competent assessment process leading to action oriented outcomes.
- Also, *PACE EH* enhances the capacity of local environmental health practitioners to more effectively manage and communicate environmental public health status to the public.

# Why Use *PACE EH*?

- *PACE EH* gives communities a way to address environmental justice by taking into consideration the environmental health concerns that may be linked to disparate conditions. For example, some *PACE EH* users have sought to address environmental justice (health) issues related to land use planning and sprawl.

# Why Use *PACE EH*?

- *PACE EH* builds culturally competent community partnerships to establish the shared responsibilities of the community and the public health community to enhance the quality of health and preventive care.

# What is Cultural Competency?

**Cultural Competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.**

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Cross, T. et al. (1989)

Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care

Georgetown University Center for Child Health and Mental Health Policy, 1989.



# Building Culturally Competent Community Partnerships

- Many minority communities have a long history of outsiders coming to their community to ‘rescue’ their members from disease and poverty. Although well meaning, many of these programs were ineffective because they did not involve community members in their planning and implementation. Some actually perpetuated discrimination and racism”

# Building Culturally Competent Community Partnerships

- Principles of Cultural Competency should guide you throughout the *PACE EH* process. Building community respect and support relies on these skills
- Cultural competence involves extending the concept of self-determination beyond the individual to the community. This guiding principle is key to community engagement.

# Benefits

-In order to effect meaningful change in addressing health disparities, local public health agencies must take an proactive role in addressing environmental health/justice issues through collaborative measures such as *PACE EH*. The *PACE EH* methodology encourages mutually beneficial environmental health changes, and increased capacity and resources to address environmental health disparities in a culturally competent fashion.

# Benefits

- *PACE EH* is an ideal process for identifying and confronting environmental justice issues given that the methodology provides opportunity for positive outcomes. For example:
- Collaborative decision-making;
- Increased understanding of a communities environmental health needs;
- Development of locally appropriate indicators;
- Enhanced appreciation of the connections between health and the environment.

# Benefits

**Benefits also include:**

- **Conversation instead of confrontation**
- **Powerful partnerships instead of misunderstandings**
- **Effective “culture-specific, individualized interventions”**
- **Effective communication**

# Benefits

- Comprehensive understanding about all aspects of community life
- Increases respect and mutual understanding among those involved.
- Increases creativity in problem-solving through new perspectives, ideas, and strategies.

# Conclusion

- The *PACE EH* process requires a great degree of collaboration with diverse members of the community. Thus, mutual respect and inclusiveness are vital aspects to achieving a successful *PACE EH* process as well achieving environmental justice.
- Because *PACE EH* is grounded in the principles of cultural competency, collaboration and environmental justice, it equips both the environmental health staff and the community with the ability to more accurately address the health status of the community.

# Resources

- *PACE EH* Resource Toolkit
  - Collaboration Manual
  - Resource List
- NACCHO Annual Learning Institute
  - Cultural Competency/EJ

More information can be found on NACCHO's website

at [www.naccho.org/general696.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/general696.cfm)